

I am for removing the code requirement as a separate element in amateur radio license testing. I am an Amateur Radio Extra Class, ARRL VE, Laurel VE, and EPA Assistant Section Manager.

My 33 years as an amateur radio operator have not eliminated the use of CW from my station, however I have never found CW to be of great interest to me in the hobby. I was a Radioman in the Navy and found that I used RTTY more in the military than I did CW. I have logged over 40,000 personal QSO's in Amateur Radio since 1997 and less than 1% are Morse Code contacts. My contacts in voice (SSB) have enabled me to achieve and are verified by over 27,000 QSL cards from 306 countries, over this period of time. I find that CW is on the same level as RTTY, PSK31, and PACKET modes. These modes while they are efficient, are very insulated from personal warmth. I read a lot into voice inflection, and voice fluctuation. With today's equipment, most CW operators generate code by a digital means, keyer, computer or other. Gone are the days when you would hear on the air a real "FIST" that long identified the person on the other end before the actual contact took place. I used to refer to the "Great Lakes Swing" in 1970 when I would hear CW operators with heavily weighted dashes compared to quick rapid dots. Now all I hear is "perfect code". I may as well learn to read RTTY and PSK31 by ear as well as CW. Let's face reality, morse code has moved ahead as all modes of amateur radio have. It is now just a digital mode to most users. The fashion of code readers, and code generation equipment is available and preferred by most to send and receive code. It is time we remove the code requirement as a separate exam in amateur radio. There is no reason that we cannot continue with the use of morse code as we do the digital modes. We should ask questions in the written exams about morse code as we do about the digital modes. Especially what are the morse code symbols for SOS. I strongly support additional questions about morse code in the written elements, and elimination of the morse code requirement as a separate element in testing. Sincerely, Pietro M. deVolpi, K3PD Licensed since 1970